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ABSTRACT

Although conventional approaches to teaching psychology are probably effective to some degree, it is possible that psychology should be a "hands on" science, i.e., students of psychology should learn to apply the concepts and principles of the theoretical regions of psychology and to solve open-ended problems through the application of psychological ideas. Guided Design, as proposed by Wales and Stager, offers a vehicle for this application of psychology because it presents the student with an open-ended problem to be solved in stages which represent successive approximations to the terminal goal Through the use of the instruction-feedback model, the student is first required to work through solutions within the group setting and is then given a suggested solution by the instructor who provides a model for problem solving. A project was constructed for lower-level students of psychology which took them through the stages of goal setting, information gathering, solution generation, constraint specification, preliminary evaluation, analysis, synthesis, and final evaluation to resolve a problem. A tentative evaluation of the project's effectiveness revealed performances on traditional exams to be similar to comparison groups who received lectures. The students significantly increased their interactions with the instructor. (Author)

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GUIDED DESIGN AS A SOCIAL LABORATORY: A BEHAVIOR THERAPY EXAMPLE

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GUIDED DESIGN AS A SOCIAL LABORATORY: A BEHAVIOR THERAPY EXAMPLE

Because there is a growing realization that traditional teaching approaches do not seem to work with today's student, many instructional innovations have been forthcoming. Typically these innovations have sought to bring more experiential activities into the classroom. It is believed by these people that active learners retain more of their experiences than passive learners who simply attempt to absorb cold facts provided by the lecturer.

One such "hands on" procedure is the guided design technique of Wales and Stager(1977). This instructional method consists of providing practical problems for the students to solve within a group setting. These open ended problems are divided into stages which represent successive approximations to the ultimate solution. Through the use of the instruction-feedback model, the student is required to work through solutions within the group setting and is then given suggested solutions. Rather than offer facts, the instructor provides a model for problem solving.

Several studies reported in the engineering education and other journals (Bailie & Wales,1975;Calvin, Kilmer, and Smith,1972;D'Amour & Wales,1977;D'Amour,1976;Feldhusen,1972;Goldberg & D'Amour,1976; Masson,1972;Sherren,1972;Stager,1974;Stager & Wales,1972;Wales,1972; Wales,1976;Wales,1973;Wales & Stager,1972;Wales & Stager,1977;and Wales, Stager, & Long,1974) have provided substantial evidence of the usefulness of this procedure. Although the procedure was developed and has been tested mostly in engineering, it seems ideally suited for education in psychology. Consistent with this belief, the purpose of this project is to provide one example of a guided design project.

METHOD

Subjects

The project was designed for use with a class in applied psychology. There were 34 students in the class.

Procedure and Stimulus Materials

See the project outline and the project itself.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparison of the guided design class to three traditional classes in applied psychology revealed that there were few performance differences on tests made roughly equivalent in difficulty. An examination of the grades for the four classes showed that the average score for all classes fell between 60 to 65 percent correct.

Although there was no significant performance advantage revealed for guided design, there was an increase in instructor-student interaction by more than 300 percent. In addition, for whatever it is worth, students reported that they enjoyed the guided design approach. They suggested combining this approach with traditional lecturing, giving both about equal weight.

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The Behavior Therapist
Outline

Situation	Ronda has just gone to work as a counselor for a community mental health center. She is expected to apply behavioral techniques to assist clients in overcoming their adjustment difficulties. In this case, she is working with a twenty five year old homosexual female.
Goal	Recommend the behavioral treatment or training modes which would be the most effective in helping the client make an adequate adjustment.
Information Needed	Client's marital status, emotional stability, employment situation, level of homosexual behavior, religious convictions, maternal interests, community acceptance of homosexual behavior, and thoughts accompanying sexual arousal.
Possible Solutions	Modeling therapy (overt and covert), operant conditioning (overt and covert), classical conditioning or aversive conditioning, orgasmic reconditioning, and desensitization therapy.
Constraints	Cost, six weeks time limit, and client's aversion to insight therapies which "continually wish to know about my relations with my parents."
Best Solution	Desensitization therapy combined with orgasmic reconditioning.
Analysis	Increase clients heterosexual interest with a minimum number of visits within the next six weeks.

A GUIDED DESIGN PROJECT FOR PLANNING A BEHAVIOR THERAPY PROGRAM FOR HOMOSEXUALITY

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Form groups of four to seven people and a select leader.

Introduction

"The material you are about to use is concerned with decision-making, a basic intellectual process which makes it possible for each of us to face and solve new problems. This material is organized in an 'Instruction-Feedback' pattern so you can participate in the solution of the problem. Each instruction presents a question the teacher raised about one step in the decision-making process. We suggest that each member of your group read each Instruction, discuss it with your team, decide on a group response, and then compare the decision with the printed Feedback which your teacher will provide. This Feedback offers a summary of what your group has probably discussed and presents the decision made by the behavioral counselor. You should realize that the purpose of the printed Feedback is to allow everyone to compare their reasoning with that of other people. No one should feel that they have to accept any of these decisions.

Each group should appoint a secretary to record the decisions made by his or her teammates. When the group feels they have completed their answer to the Instruction, ask the teacher to come to the group to check the work or have the secretary take the record to the teacher. If the teacher believes the work is acceptable, the secretary will receive copies of the Feedback and the next Instruction to give to the group. If the work is not yet acceptable, the teacher may ask questions to stimulate further thinking." *

THE BEHAVIOR THERAPIST

Instruction A: State the goals of the job

Ronda Earnest has just started a job as a behavioral counselor for a community mental health center. Ronda was employed because of her expertise in behavior therapy, and also because there was a shortage of female counselors for the center's predominantly female cliental. After one week of orientation, Ronda was given her first case.

Ms. Judy X, Ronda's first client, entered the center seeking help for what she called "crazy thoughts and feelings about other

females." Upon completion of the initial interview, Ronda had learned that Judy had been obsessed with homosexual thoughts for the past five years of her twenty-five year life. Furthermore, she had recently engaged in homosexual behavior with other females. If you were the therapist, what would you expect to accomplish through your work? What is the goal or objective of Ronda's service?

_____

_____

Feedback A - (This should appear on a separate page.)

Ronda replied that her objective was to assist Judy in making an adjustment which would be both personally satisfying and socially adaptive. She must not only help Judy live with herself, but she must also help her make a realistic adjustment to her particular environment.

_____

Instruction B - Gather Information

Ronda's objective was correct. Now she will need to gather information which will facilitate the achievement of the goal. What is the absolute minimal information needed by Ronda before the objective might be reached?**

_____

Feedback B - (This should appear on a separate page.)

Ronda decided that she would have to ask the following questions:

1. What is the client's emotional state? How does she feel about her thoughts and behavior?

2. What are her feelings and thoughts about males in contrast to females? Does she feel fear, anger, disgust, etc. toward males in regard to sexual activity?

3. What are her feelings about marriage and children? Does she wish to have a family?

4. How does she rate her ability to attract males?

*From Wales, C. E. & Stager, R. A., Guided Design, West Virginia University, 1977.

**Reading assignments consist of any of the standard texts on behavior therapy.

5. What do her family and friends know about her behavior? Would they accept or reject her if they knew of her behavior?

6. What would her employers think of her behavior? Would her behavior be viewed as an advantage or disadvantage?

7. Has she ever sought help before and what were the results?

Instruction C - Generate possible solutions.

After rather extensive interviewing, Ronda had the following answers to her questions:

1. The client was in a state of almost constant but moderate depression with periodic episodes of agitation.

2. Judy expressed feelings of tremendous anxiety when thinking of sexual relations with a male. In fact, she reported that her thoughts of a male would prevent sexual orgasm even though prior to the thoughts she had been sexually aroused. The opposite was true of her thoughts and feelings in regard to females.

3. Judy reports a desire to have children but feels that she may have to adopt or find other means to create a family for herself.

4. She believes herself to be attractive to males and reports that she has mutually satisfying social relations with males. It is only situations of intimacy which elicit her anxiety.

5. Her family and most of her friends are unaware of her "problem." They would probably be disappointed in her if They knew of her problem. She was very concerned with the privacy of the therapy.

6. Judy has recently obtained employment in a predominantly female preparatory school. Because of the public relations problem, she believes the school would be very reluctant to keep her as an employee if they knew of her "problem."

7. Judy has undergone psychoanalytic therapy for the condition but found it to be completely ineffective. Besides, she reported that she had only six weeks before she must leave, and psychoanalysis takes too long. She did like the approach of keeping the therapy in the abstract and confined to the office or clinic.

Now that you and Ronda have this interview information it is possible to plan a counseling approach. List ten behavioral-learning devices that might be utilized in this situation.

_____

_____

Feedback C - (This should appear on a separate page.)

Ronda considered the following approaches as viable alternatives.

1. Noncontingent catharsis - simply allowing the client to talk it out without punishing or reinforcing her statements.
2. Orgasmic reconditioning - attempting to associate male related stimuli with orgasm.
3. Desensitization therapy - reducing anxiety associated with male related stimuli.
4. Overt aversive conditioning - punishing Judy with electro-shock, etc. in presence of homosexual scenes.
5. Covert aversive conditioning - having Judy imagine homo-sexual scenes while also imagining aversive scenes.
6. Overt positive reinforcement - reinforce for heterosexual activities.
7. Covert positive reinforcement - having Judy imagine pleasant scenes when also imagining heterosexual activities.
8. Modeling (covert) - having Judy imagine other females in intimate relations with males.
9. Assertion training - complete range of assertion techniques.
10. Modeling (overt) - providing a model of heterosexual activities.

_____

Instruction D - Specify the "constraints" which might limit the solution.

Now Ronda must determine the criteria or constraints which limit her choice of options. What are the critical constraints Ronda must consider in her plan?

_____

Feedback D - (This should appear on a separate page.)

Ronda said that she believed that she should consider the following constraints.

1. Time availability was a critical factor.
2. Community opinion regarding use of aversive techniques would probably be negative.
3. Ronda's feelings regarding her personal needs for privacy in regard to sexual behavior would be a factor. She would probably be reluctant to model the desired sexual behavior.
4. Judy would probably prefer to keep the training sessions within the confines of the mental health clinic.

Instruction E - Preliminary evaluation

Applying the previous constraints enabled Ronda to develop a treatment-training program. You should apply the constraints as well as the interview data from Instruction C and rank the procedures from most to least recommended. Do this individually first and then come to a group consensus.

	Individual (rank)	d*	Group (rank)	d*	Ronda (rank)
1. Covert modeling	_____	_	_____	_	_____
2. Orgasmic reconditioning	_____	_	_____	_	_____
3. Noncontingent catharsis	_____	_	_____	_	_____
4. Assertion training	_____	_	_____	_	_____
5. Overt modeling	_____	_	_____	_	_____
6. Desensitization therapy	_____	_	_____	_	_____
7. Covert aversive conditioning	_____	_	_____	_	_____
8. Overt aversive conditioning	_____	_	_____	_	_____
9. Overt positive reinforcement	_____	_	_____	_	_____
10. Covert positive reinforcement	_____	_	_____	_	_____

*deviation

Feedback E - (This should appear on a separate page.)

Ronda decided that she would rank the procedures in the following way.

1. Desensitization therapy
2. Covert aversive conditioning
3. Orgasmic reconditioning
4. Covert positive reinforcement
5. Covert modeling
6. Overt positive reinforcement
7. Assertion training
8. Modeling overt
9. Aversive conditioning
10. Noncontingent catharsis

Instruction F - Analysis

Compare your individual and then the group's recommendation to those of Ronda. Sum the rank deviations for each coming to an individual and then a group score.

Once Ronda has ranked the behavioral techniques available, she must now work up a treatment battery composed of three of her top five choices. You choose any three of these ten techniques and discuss their application to Judy's problem. What components of the problem would you choose to attack? Be sure to review the interview data and the constraints imposed on the problem.

Feedback F - (This should appear on a separate page.)

Ronda decided to concentrate on Judy's heterosexual anxiety and her homosexual thoughts. Therefore, she decided on the following battery.

1. Desensitization therapy to reduce Judy's male anxiety.
2. Covert aversion therapy to condition the homosexual thoughts.
3. Orgasmic reconditioning to condition orgasm to male related images.

Instruction G - Synthesis

Now you and Ronda should work up a six week program (twelve sessions) in which you apply all three techniques.

Feedback G - (This should appear on a separate page.)

Ronda's program consisted of the following program.

1. Session 1 and 2
   Gather information and client orientation.

2. Sessions 3 and 4
   Relaxation training with development of the fear hierarchy.

3. Session 5
   Desensitization begins and is continued throughout the remaining sessions.

4. Session 6
   Homework assignment involving masturbation with heterosexual stimuli. This is continued throughout the remaining three weeks.

5. Session 7
   Covert aversive conditioning begins and is continued until the end of the six week period.

Instruction H - Evaluation

Ronda must submit her plan to the staff of the community mental health center. They will approve or reject the program on the basis of the following questions.

1. Does the above plan satisfy the objective?

2. Is the program ethical?

3. Is the program legal?

4. Is the program practical?

5. Is the program economical?

How would Ronda respond to these questions? What additional information might she need?

Feedback H - (This should appear on a separate page.)

1. Ronda stated that the available literature would support her contention that the techniques selected would be effective. However, she proposed that she evaluate the

program by using a before-after design. She believed that this design was the only feasible one for this situation, but she added that more valid designs should be employed for more accurate evaluation of future treatment efforts.

As far as the data to be used, she recommended using the client-student reports of her homosexual behavior. In addition, she proposed that she use the clinics galvanic skin response equipment to evaluate changes in arousal which should follow the training sessions.

2. Ronda also stated that the program was consistent with the ethics of her profession. Furthermore, she added that she had purposefully avoided the use of aversive devices which were overt in character.

3. Ronda had reviewed the laws of her state and reported that her program was completely legal.

4. Ronda stated that the program was practical when considering the time and visit limitations.

5. Finally, Ronda added that the program would use approximately thirty six of her hours. Her salary for this time would be approximately two hundred dollars as opposed to the two hundred forty dollars that the client would have had to pay for twelve hours of therapy-training.

Conclusion

You have just completed the diagnostic-planning stage one therapist might use when confronting a complaint from a client. Your recommendations and the recommendations of your group could be perfectly valid and yet not identical to Ronda's program. However, you should attempt to understand why Ronda chose her particular approach.